

HARFORD COUNTY.

REV. L. VAN BOKKELEN, D. D.,

State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

I have selected but two subjects for the report. The High School and School Houses.

We have no High School—we have no funds to sustain one. Our County Commissioners failed to make any local levy, and it is with difficulty that we can keep the common schools in successful operation *three terms* during the year. Until the common schools can be kept open four terms, there is but little probability that the Board will appropriate any funds for a High School, notwithstanding their high appreciation of such an institution.

The second and absorbing subject with us is school houses. Some sections are very needy, and some are grossly culpable. They have not manifested sufficient interest in this matter to secure any portion of the old fund devoted to such purposes. The custom in this County has been uniformly this:—the patrons within the school district contributed about two-thirds the value of the house to be built, and the Board furnished the balance. In this way, many comfortable houses have been erected. In some localities, however, (Havre de Grace, e g.,) nothing was done on the part of the patrons, and consequently they enjoy no part of the old building fund. Many of the sparsely populated patrons of the County have evinced more interest and energy, and obtained more satisfactory results. We trust the towns and villages in the County will soon follow this worthy example. It is a lamentable fact, that many interested persons, who are prodigal in other respects, are penurious in this. Many who will spend dollars for the amusement and unprofitable gratification of their children, are not willing to invest a dime in what might be termed even a comfortable school house. The question is, what shall we do? Some say, suspend the Public Schools in certain localities, until their proportion of the school fund is sufficient to build suitable houses. Such action would enable us to keep more of our best teachers in the County; as it now is, the better class will, of course, go to such Counties as furnish the best houses and pay the best salaries.

The persons who are generally the most tardy in all school enterprises; the most ready fault-finders; the most severe critics on the teachers; and the first to give their invaluable opinion of the school system are the small tax payers—such as pay tax on one thousand dollars,—that is, one dollar and a half a year,—and yet who send, free of charge, four children to the Public School. This brings the education of their children to precisely the sum of twelve and a half cents per term—something like one cent a week. It is a pleasant consideration, however, that many of the large tax payers, who